



ROBERT L. EHRLICH, JR.
GOVERNOR

STATE HOUSE
100 STATE CIRCLE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401
(410) 974-3901
(TOLL FREE) 1-800-811-8336

TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

May 21, 2003

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.
President of the Senate
State House
Annapolis MD 21401

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, today I have vetoed Senate Bill 588 - *State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists – Membership*.

Senate Bill 588 reduces the membership of the State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists from 13 to 11 members by eliminating the two physician members as of October 1, 2003.

The current Board consists of 13 members from multiple disciplines and backgrounds: three licensed audiologists; three speech-language pathologists; two state-licensed physicians certified by the American Board of Otolaryngology; two consumer members, one of whom must be hearing impaired; and, three licensed hearing aid dispensers.

I believe the removal of the two physician members, also known as ear, nose and throat specialists (ENTs), from the Board is not in the best interests of Maryland consumers who rely upon the Board to conduct its business from a multi-disciplinary perspective. The State Board argued during deliberation of this legislation that it believes the citizens of Maryland benefit from the medical and clinical expertise that the two ENT members bring to the Board. Moreover, the physician members of the Board have supported an increased scope of practice for audiologists and speech-language pathologists, and their presence continues to build upon the growing cooperation and support among the disciplines represented on the Board. The structure of the current Board brings together all of the relevant professions involved in hearing and speech health care for Maryland.

For the above stated reasons, I have vetoed SB 588.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor